

Remarks

Claims 1, 11 and 18 are canceled herein. Claims 2-4, 9-10, 12, 14, 19-20 and 23 are amended herein. Claims 2-10, 12-17 and 19-24 remain pending in the Application.

Rejection under 35 USC 112

Claims 1-24

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-24 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner has stated that Claims 1, 11 and 18 contain a discrepancy.

Claims 1, 11 and 18 have been canceled herein. Therefore, the rejection of Claims 1, 11 and 18 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is moot.

Newly amended Independent Claims 4, 14 and 20 have been amended to overcome the discrepancy. Therefore, the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is overcome.

Rejection under 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 11-13, 18, 19 and 23-24

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 11-13, 18, 19 and 23-24 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuwata et al. (6535301) in view of Nakamura et al. (5497431). Applicant has reviewed the cited reference and respectfully submits that the present invention is not taught or rendered obvious over Kuwata et al. in view of Nakamura et al. for the following rationale.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the allowable subject matter of Claims 4-9, 14-17 and 20-22 if rewritten in Independent form to overcome the

rejection(s) under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, set forth in this office action and to include all of the limitations of the base Claim and any intervening Claims.

Applicant has rewritten Claims 4, 14 and 20 in Independent form to include all of the limitations of the base Claim and any intervening Claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the now allowable Claims.

With respect to Claims 1, 11 and 18, Applicant respectfully points out that Claims 1, 11 and 18 are canceled herein. Therefore, the rejection with respect to Claims 1, 11 and 18 is moot.

With respect to Claims 2-3, Applicant respectfully points out that Claims 2-3 depend from the allowable Claim 4 and recite further features of the present claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully states that Claims 2-3 are allowable as pending from an allowable base Claim.

With respect to Claims 12 and 13, Applicant respectfully points out that Claims 12 and 13 depend from the allowable Claim 14 and recite further features of the present claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully states that Claims 12 and 13 are allowable as pending from an allowable base Claim.

With respect to Claims 19, 23 and 24, Applicant respectfully points out that Claims 19, 23 and 24 depend from the allowable Claim 20 and recite further features of the present claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully states that Claims 19, 23 and 24 are allowable as pending from an allowable base Claim.

Claim 10

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 10 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuwata et al. (6535301) in view of Nakamura et al. (5497431) and further in view of Takiguchi. Applicant has reviewed the cited reference and respectfully submits that the present invention is not taught or rendered obvious over Kuwata et al. in view of Nakamura et al. and further in view of Takiguchi for the following rationale.

With respect to Claim 10, Applicant respectfully points out that Claim 10 depends from the allowable Claim 4 and recites further features of the present claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully states that Claim 10 is allowable as pending from an allowable base Claim.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the allowable subject matter of Claims 4-9, 14-17 and 20-22 if rewritten in Independent form to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, set forth in this office action and to include all of the limitations of the base Claim and any intervening Claims.

Applicant has rewritten Claims 4, 14 and 20 in Independent form to include all of the limitations of the base Claim and any intervening Claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the now allowable Claims.

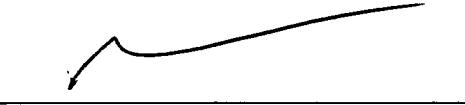
Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests issuance of the now allowable Claims 2-10, 12-17 and 19-24.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,
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